foggy nights; foggy minds

firverse - I

bitchietozier (ResonanceAesthetic)

foggy nights; foggy minds by bitchietozier (ResonanceAesthetic)

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Summary:

eddie kaspbrak came into portland, maine trying to reinvent himself. was the plan to be seduced by a boy in an indie band with commitment issues and insane roommates? no. did it happen? yes.

1. welcome to portland, pretty brown eyes

Author's Note:

> hey sorry this shit is so short. i wanted to get this out there to keep the content flowin B)

Fresh out of college, Eddie Kaspbrak hopped off his ass and got a taxi out of Derry, Maine. He'd had enough of his mother's frenzied eyes on him, and his sexuality wasn't exactly welcomed in the seemingly suburban city-state. There was no reason to stay in Derry, and out there, oh, the possibilities were astoundingly endless. He sat in the backseat of his taxi deciding where he'd go—

"Mr. Kaspbrak?" His taxi driver had his eyes on him.

"Oh, sorry sir?"

"…Where to? I need to know where you want to go before I get on the highway."

Fuck, Eddie thought. He laughed awkwardly as he drew a big blank. "Where do you suggest for someone who wants to reinvent themselves?"

The driver took a moment. "Tough one. I suggest Portland. It's the biggest city closest to here."

"I'll take it."

The driver nodded. "Good choice. Just let me know the specifics when we get close."

Eddie smiled. A new life stood ahead of him. No one in Portland knew he existed. Adrenaline pumped in his veins. But the question still stood: where the hell would he go once he got to Portland? His brain went immediately to his previously internalized taboo of boys. His mother would hate for him to hook up with a *boy* his first night away, and that's exactly what he was going to do. Eddie always liked

the boys his mother hated; they were dark, mysterious, rough and ragged, and most definitely not going to Heaven. The young man in the taxi kept this in mind as he swiped through his cheap dating app. The men in Portland, however, were not as groundbreaking as Eddie had expected. That was until he found the profile of a boy named Richie Tozier. The only information he gave in his profile was his picture—a seemingly professionally taken photo of him in an alley smoking a cigarette, his name, his age—same as Eddie's, the ripe age of 22, and his occupation—he apparently had two: singer for the band Philtatos and 'professional bad boy'. Oh, Eddie liked this boy. He quickly messaged him a "Hey" and waited. The other took about half an hour to respond.

Richie Tozier : **Eddie Kaspbrak**

Eddie: Hey

Richie: hey, sorry was in rehearsals all fuckin day. do i know you?

Eddie: No, I'm new in town. I'm Eddie. I'm coming in tonight, and I was wondering if you knew if there was anywhere fun to be?

Richie: you could come watch our band play in a small venue. usually i'd push away people like you, but you're cute, eddie. depending on when you come into portland, head for the doug fir around 7pm. look out for the band philtatos. you like indie shit?

Eddie: Hell yes. Was the only one in my damn neighborhood with an actual taste in music.

Richie: fuuuuuck yes. you like hozier?

Eddie: I couldn't live without his album if I tried. Where's his next one?

Richie: i totally fucking agree holy shit. okay, eddie, im no longer suggesting you come to the doug fir. im fuckin demanding you come.

Eddie: I'll be there. Just passed the Portland sign.

Richie: welcome to portland, pretty brown eyes. i gotta get back to

rehearsals

Eddie was blushing as he closed the chat. ‘Pretty brown eyes’ Richie had called him. He checked the time; it was already 6pm. Shit. He had to book a hotel in case things went south, get showered, and get to the Doug Fir in an hour. All for the boy who called him ‘pretty brown eyes’.

2. a night at the doug fir

Summary for the Chapter:

> outside, in the city, the deafening noise of cars and useless chatter of people thickened the air; inside, in the Doug Fir, all noise was purposeful and man-made.
>
> :
>
> a night at the doug fir and what happened afterward.

Notes for the Chapter:

> bev briefly talks about her abusive dad so keep an eye out if you dont like that shit
>
> also keep in mind these boyses (and everyone else) are of age B))))

The Doug Fir was old. It was this creaky, rundown brick building from the 20's that some guy decided to make a bar out of. When the whole bar idea got as old as the building, another guy paid good money to have a small venue set up. The venue wasn't too shabby; the dark wooden stage complimented the dim lighting, and the acoustics were surprisingly good for being in the middle of a busy city. Eddie practically fell down the stairs trying to access the place; his nerves were on fire. He checked his phone, and he was just on time. It was 6:58p.m. Eddie absently opened the door to feel himself being transported to a whole other atmosphere. Outside, in the city, the deafening noise of cars and useless chatter of people thickened the air; inside, in the Doug Fir, all noise was purposeful and man-made. Time seemed to fade to nonexistence. Light was minimal as if one didn't need eyes to see with. Eddie shivered in awe. His soul seemed to escape him for a moment before a voice onstage brought it back.

"Hey, guys."

Eddie's heart leaped into his throat. Richie Tozier himself sat on a barstool onstage with a guitar in his hands—on which "φίλτατος" was written in black ink. However, it was only Richie on stage; there was no band.

"I decided it would just be me tonight. I wanted to do some personal covers for someone who's supposed to be coming into town tonight." At this, the small crowd hurrahed, for the Doug Fir was a welcoming environment in the midst of urban chaos. Richie's eyes scanned the audience, and he smirked when they fell upon Eddie in the back. He smiled and waved softly, accompanied by a quiet "Hey, pretty brown eyes". Eddie felt his face grow hot. He made his way more towards the front and sat at a table alone. He watched as Richie set himself up, joking and making conversation the crowd Eddie assumed he knew very well. With the first chord that was played, Eddie knew the song: 'Jackie and Wilson' by Hozier. Richie Tozier was a sly motherfucker.

"So tired trying to see from behind the red in my eyes—"

He had the voice of an angel. Eddie was so enthralled in the magnificence of his voice that he didn't realize someone had taken the seat next to him. A young girl, around Eddie's age, took a drag from the joint in her hand. Her red hair was short and messy, and freckles made constellations on her face. When she had noticed him staring, she spoke without turning to him.

"Nice to know you actually showed up, 'Eddie'."

"Uh, who are you? And how do you know my name?"

"Richie's been blabbing on and on about you all day. I'm one of his friends, Beverly. Call me Bev." She offered him the joint, which he politely declined.

"I've got asthma but thanks. And… he's been talking about me?"

She almost disregarded his first comment as she took another drag. "It's not every night that someone new in town shows up. He *looooves* fresh meat. He wouldn't shut his trap when you said you'd be here, sayin' all kinds of braggy shit. And look what the cat dragged in,"

Bev laughed as she mumbled out the quasi-insult. Eddie forced a small laugh. He didn't know if Bev was serious about the 'fresh meat' part. Not like he had time to think about it because the girl kept talking.

"So where'd you come from, huh?"

"Derry. It's a small town about three hours from here. Hated the fucking place."

Bev's eyes glittered at his enthusiasm. "Oooo, what's so bad about Derry, Eds?"

"Too much white noise," Eddie huffed, "basically a suburban city-state where homophobia and judgment reigned superior. After college, my ma caught wind that I was gay, and she almost had an aneurysm. Next thing I knew, I was in a taxi. I guess fate landed me here."

Bev took a long drag and blew the smoke in Eddie's face. "Fuckin' sick, Eddie. Yeah, I feel the whole 'shit parent' trope. My dad used to sexually assault me when I was a kid, but I almost killed him in self-defense one day," Bev laughed. Eddie didn't know how, "The kiddiefucker ended up in jail, and he's still there today. I went to my aunt's 'til I was 18, and now I'm here."

The two sat in relative silence as Richie was now playing 'Cherry Wine'. Bev, again, offered the joint to Eddie. He reluctantly took it this time. After a long drag and a copious amount of coughing, Eddie handed it back, but Bev refused to take it. "I've had enough for tonight," she said with a small smile. Eddie and Bev slowly began to bond over the next hour, but as Richie's set came to a close, Bev wandered off.

"Alright, thanks again for coming tonight, you guys," Richie grinned as the small crowd applauded him. "The rest of the crew will be back next week." As people started to leave, Eddie started to pay more attention to the lanky boy on stage. He was wearing slightly torn black jeans, a white and black striped crop top that showed just a bit of his pale but toned skin, and a leather jacket to keep the cold out. His loose black curls were messy, but they were messy in a way that

was both hot and cute. His glasses rested on the bridge of his nose like a king in his throne. Richie caught him gawking, and he chuckled and waved at Eddie.

“Hey, babe, so do you wanna get out of here?” Richie hopped off of the stage and waltzed over towards the table.

Eddie blushed at the pet name. “Yeah, I do actually. Your place or mine?”

“Oh boy, Eddie. You’re gonna wanna come over to mine.”

Before Eddie could protest, Richie took Ed’s hand in his and left the Doug. Eddie expected to see a car, but Richie kept walking.

“You got a car or something, Richie?”

“Nah, I don’t need one. I can walk everywhere I need to.”

Eddie crinkled his nose. “It’s one of those cities huh?”

Richie feigned taking offense. “What’s wrong with a good night stroll, Eds? What do you have against me? You’ve hurt me and my city.”

“Sorry, *princess* Richie.”

Richie gasped. “How dare you, *Eddie Spaghetti*.”

“I literally felt my insides cringe when you said that. You’re lucky you’re hot.”

Richie grunted in approval. He squeezed Eddie’s hand and stopped at the door of a brick townhouse. “This is us, babe,” he said in a low voice. The old door opened, and Richie guided Eddie inside. Up the small flight of stairs was an impressively adequate, modern living room. Richie led Eddie towards the couch where Richie sat down and Eddie straddled him. Richie angled his head to whisper in Eddie’s ear, “You sure you want this, pretty brown eyes?” Eddie let his head drop into the crook of the other’s neck and whimpered in response, hands resting on Richie’s shoulders. Richie left an open-mouthed kiss on Eddie’s neck and pushed him slightly off to remove his own jacket and shirt. This gave Eddie time to shakily take off his sweater. Holy

shit, he thought, this was actually happening. Richie brought him back in by running his fingertips along his spine with one hand and resting the other on the nape of Eddie's neck. As Richie settled on leaving Eddie with hickeys on his lower neck and collarbone, Eddie moaned softly and gently rutted his hips against the other. Richie's hand on Ed's lower back moved to his hip, and he smirked into Eddie's patchy skin when he ground his hips up into those of the boy straddling him. Eddie let out a low, needy moan and moved Richie's hand to the button on his jeans. "*Fuck*, alright," Richie panted, "not your first rodeo is it—"

The door crashed open. Eddie squeaked and looked down at Richie, who only groaned. The sound of sloppy kisses and sultry moans filled the room. Eddie watched in shock as two other boys made it up the stairs—barely, they were almost too busy groping and sucking each other's faces. "Eddie, meet Bill and Stan," Richie snorted. The other couple stopped dead in their tracks.

One of them, with curly hair like Richie's but brown, stammered, "Richie! We thought you'd be out later."

"Don't sweat it, Stan. It's only the fourth time you've done this."

The other boy wheezed with laughter. "Stan, y-you've gotta start cuh-calling the guy before we g-get to the house. We can't p-pay our rent with accidental porn."

Stan shot the boy a look. "*Shut it*, Bill."

Stan and Bill ran upstairs together, laughter and curses following. After a moment of silence, Eddie burst out laughing. Richie flushed red and covered his face with his hands.

"Babe, I'm so sorry. Fucking roommates."

"No, no, it's completely fine. Actually, it's happened to me before, but that's beside the point," Eddie squeezed Richie's hand, which still rested on the button of his jeans. Eddie again let his head sink into the crook of the other boy's neck, "Please don't stop."

But of course, the door loudly opened again. Richie cursed, having

slipped two fingers under Eddie's waistband. A familiar face rolled onto the couch, unaware of the two boys there with her. She smelled solely of weed. Richie groaned.

"*Beverly*."

She looked up. Her eyes were glazed over, and she giggled like a child as she understood the situation.

"Ooooh, sorry, Richie. Didn't see you there, Eddie." She said this, but still, she did not move. Instead, she turned on the television. Richie glanced up at Eddie as if to ask him if he still wanted to continue. Eddie sighed.

"Richie, I think I'd better go." He turned to get up out of Richie's lap, but Richie laid a hand on his thigh.

"You might as well stay the night. It's late as fuck, and these streets do get a little sketchy."

"Thanks, Rich," Eddie sat down on the couch beside him.

3. richie's victims

Notes for the Chapter:

short again! my bad

He woke up on a couch that wasn't his own. Initially startled, he sat up too quickly and gave himself a split-second headache. He looked over to see that there was a small kitchen on the other side of the room. Beverly was there, turned away from him, but just before Eddie could speak up she turned around, caught his eyes, and smiled.

"Mornin', sleepyhead. It's around 11 a.m., and I got bored, so I made pancakes for your ass."

"Thanks, Bev. But where's—"

"Richie? He already left. I'm surprised he let you stay. Richie Rich doesn't usually let his hookups hang around when he leaves."

"Ah," Eddie sat awkwardly on the couch. Bev looked up at him again, her eyes suddenly cold and static.

"You gonna come eat these pancakes?"

He snapped out of his daze. "Yeah, yeah, sure."

Eddie clumsily ambled towards the counter and sat down. He studied the pancakes for a minute just in case Bev had laced them with some kind of drug. It was only after he was sure that he began eating. The girl on the other side of the counter opened her mouth again, and to Eddie's disdain, she was talking with food in her mouth.

"If I didn't know any better, I think Richie liked you," she eyed Eddie playfully.

Eddie nearly choked. Bev continued.

"For a couple of reasons actually: one, he talked nonstop about you when you said you'd come by the Doug Fir. He's never a Chatty Cathy. Two, he actually wanted you to stay after y'all failed to fuck.

Three, you fell asleep with your head in his lap, and he didn't move you at all until he had to! He's usually cold as ice the morning after. Actually, funny story, this hung-over girl got too touchy with him this one time, and he nearly had a mental breakdown. He *hated it*," an awkward silence followed, "but anyways I haven't seen him be so kind to someone he's taken home in quite some time… like two years."

Eddie nearly spit out his drink, "*Two years*? What was two years ago?"

Bev half-heartedly laughed. "It was when Richie took me home when I'd just got settled in Portland. He was at the Doug Fir with Bill and Stan—the three of 'em got this townhouse in the first place—, and I was some weed chick that Richie somehow took interest in. We four went home; Richie and I talked, fucked, and talked some more, and the next thing I knew, it all became a daily routine. I've lived here rent-free for two years granted I do the cooking and cleaning shit."

"But you and Richie…?"

Bev froze momentarily, eyes becoming glassy for a split second; however, she became nonchalant and cool again. "We just didn't work out. We're great at being friends, but Rich isn't really a commitment guy. I think you might be an exception if you play your cards right, Eddie Spaghetti."

Eddie blushed and opened his mouth to protest against the nickname, but Bev held her hand up, silencing him.

"I want you to know who you're getting into. This isn't some romcom where Richie changes overnight for you, but I really think you could make him happier and more consistent if you're patient. And you like Richie; I'm not wrong about that am I?"

"No, no, I do like him. A lot actually—"

Bev grinned. "Okay, great. I'm gonna give you some names. These people are regulars at the Doug Fir, but they're also some of Rich's hookups and friends. Go talk to 'em and update me."

Bev snatched Eddie's phone—he didn't even know he had it with him?—and put her number in. She also put in a notes tab labeled 'Richie's Victims'. The list was as followed:

Beverly Marsh
Mike Hanlon
Ben Hanscom
Stanley Uris (usually found with Bill Denbrough)
Patrick Hockstetter
Georgia Norman
Amos Nguyen

Eddie stared at the list. "Just six people?"

"Ed, that's just the notable list. If I'd typed in even the last month, I'd be having you talk to more than a dozen people."

"Shit."

"Exactly. Now if you wanna know what you're getting into, I expect to see you at the Doug Fir tonight," Bev smiled.

Notes for the Chapter:

> told you i'd add ben and mike
>
> also, fyi, georgia norman and amos nguyen are minor characters i've added to create diversity. you'll see how B)

4. the han brothers

Summary for the Chapter:

> eddie encounters michael and benjo AKA the han brothers

The Doug Fir buzzed quietly. It had been two days since Bev sent him on the pseudo-mission, but he'd had no luck finding a single name on the list. He sat at the bar and pulled out his phone. He'd been texting with Richie a good amount over the past two days—mostly they talked about music, and Richie bragged about his upcoming EP.

Richie Tozier : Eddie Kaspbrak

Eddie: Hey, Rich. You at the Doug Fir tonight?

Richie: sorry ed. wish i could. the band wants to work on our ep tonight.

Eddie: I gotta see you again sometime. Tell me when you're free.

Richie: i can do lunch tomorrow if that works for you, babe. i've been in portland for a while and i know my way around the eateries

Eddie: I have zero plans ever.

Richie: then you better put this shit on your calendar. see you tomorrow, fucker. my house 3p.m. B)

Eddie: I'll be sure to save the date, asshole.

Eddie smiled as he exited the chat. The giddy feeling didn't last long, however, because Eddie felt someone tap his shoulder. He whirled around, prepared to raise his fist and sock a drunken asshole. Instead, two men—around Eddie's age—flinched behind him.

"Hey, sorry! Me and my friend just thought we recognized you from somewhere. I'm Ben," he had a gravelly voice but a jolly face when he spoke, "and this is my friend Michael."

Michael spoke up. "No need to be so formal, Benjo. Call me Mike.

Mike Hanlon. Benjo and I attend the Maine College of Art. You new in town?"

Eddie had jinxed himself. Before him stood two of Richie's 'victims': Mike Hanlon and Ben Hanscom.

"Yeah, I'm new in town. I came from Derry if you've ever heard of it. I'm Eddie."

They both smiled. Eddie found it contagious. "Eddie," Ben looked as if he were in deep thought, "didn't I see you here with—wait, no—do you know a guy named Richie Tozier?"

Eddie broke out into a cold sweat. "Yeah, uh, about that—"

"Because honestly, I love him to death as a local music artist, but he's not a great guy. He and his crowd are bad influences. Both Mike and I…have had bad experiences with 'im. I mean," Ben's eyes softened, "you really don't have to listen to us, but I just wanted to let you know that he's someone you wanna make sure that you don't really lean on."

Mike nodded in silent agreement. Eddie forced a smile and a laugh.

"Thanks guys for, uh, your advice. Yeah I'll take care of myself."

Ben's face lit up. "Glad we talked, Eddie. If you ever need anything, don't be afraid to run down by MECA's campus."

The two men shuffled their way away from the bar where Eddie sat. Fuckin' hell, he thought, that was weird as shit. He texted Bev immediately and hoped to God he could get some kind of answers.

Beverly Marsh : Eddie Kaspbrak

Eddie: Bev. What the fuck.

Beverly: what happened? did ya run into anyone?

Eddie: Yeah. Mike Hanlon and Ben Hanscom. Weirdest guys I've ever met. Once they figured out I knew Rich they went full-on therapist like he'd killed my mom. They told me I could visit them at their college?

Beverly: fuck bro i'm sorry you had to experience what rich and i call the Han Brothers Hook (get it? both of their last names start w Han. hahahaha). long story short, rich picked up both of these dudes while he was blackout drunk. he doesn't even remember what happened, but these guys were shook. now they go around tryna convert everyone to Anti-Richieism. they tried to do it to you.

Eddie: Did I get hexed? Or Hooked, I guess?

Beverly: dunno. you still like rich?

Eddie: Why wouldn't I? Yeah, maybe you guys aren't a stereotypically 'good' crowd, but you're tightknit and loving and that's what matters. Richie hasn't wronged me in any way, and his ass is nice.

Beverly: thank fuck. richie came home smiling like an idiot. i can see his headass rn. y'all are going to lunch tomorrow?

Eddie: Yeah. I'm excited. I realize I've only been at the Doug Fir, your townhouse, my hotel, and a local bagel place the entire fucking time I've been in this city.

Beverly: we gotta get your ass out more. oh, i told rich you said his ass was nice. he asked how your neck was doin. hes being lowkey but my stoner eyes saw everything, so don't try and act flustered.

Eddie: Tell him my neck is fine. Understandably patchy but fine. Oh wait, Bev, do I really need to talk to Stan?

Beverly: he's fine with it honestly. if he wasn't 100% w richie he would have moved it after it happened (btw it happened before bill. richie's anti-commitment but he physically cant cheat). in fact, you could literally come over rn and you and stan could chat.

Eddie: Headed your way.

Notes for the Chapter:

dont yell, mike and benjo's characters will develop.
the losers club isnt dead.

but are you ready to delve into stanley uris

5. the reckless abandon

Summary for the Chapter:

stangst

After a brisk walk, Eddie ended up at the door of the familiar townhouse. He rapped the door softly. Bev nearly immediately opened the door with a nonchalant look in her eyes.

“Hey. We were waiting for you.”

“Well, I’m here now.” Eddie smiled softly. Bev smirked back.

“What are we standing around for then?”

Eddie followed Bev inside. Richie and Stan sat on the couch in the living room, but Bill was surprisingly absent. Bev leaned herself over the couch.

“Hey, boys, we just about ready to get started?”

Stan stayed silent; Richie paled but maintained his cool. Eddie noticed as Richie hastily lit a cigarette and took a long drag. His eyes wandered to Eddie, who had followed Bev’s lead and sat on the end of the couch next to him. Eddie gave him a concerned glance, but he brushed it off. Stan spoke first.

“We’d just graduated high school, right, Rich? That’s when our little escapade started,” his voice was flat, “You were the free spirit, and I was the old soul. I needed to feel youth, and you craved my stability. It’s just,” Stan looked somewhat painfully at Eddie, “it became too much. Youth became recklessness; stability became addiction and dependence.”

Richie was shaking. He stared at his feet. Stan looked uneasy, but he continued.

“I stayed out partying. I got drunk. I did drugs. You clung to my side. You got angry when I looked at someone the wrong way. We got so caught up in each other that we lost ourselves. I literally almost

overdosed twice, and you hated that I looked at some guy, Bob Gray I think, too long; you got into a fight with him, and he stabbed you. I was crossfaded when I drove you to the hospital. You… you still have the scar, don't you?"

"Yeah," Richie barely whispered. He was completely numb as he lifted up his shirt. A jagged, but short red scar was above Richie's left hip. Eddie felt his knees weaken. He had previously dismissed the mark as a birthmark, but he had been completely wrong.

"Fuck, Rich," Eddie croaked as he watched the first tear roll down Richie's cheek. His cigarette hung loosely between his lips, and he dared not look at Eddie. He was deathly afraid of crumbling in front of him.

"We were toxic as fuck. We fueled each other's extremities. I think we would have killed each other eventually," Stan wiped a tear from his eye as he said this, "but we survived. There's redemption for both of us. I'm finding my redemption with Bill. I can finally figure out who I am again. But you? Richie, on God, I don't think I know who you are. I don't think *you* know who you are. I still love you like a brother, but it feels like I've been living with a stranger for a while."

At this point, Stan stood up. His eyes were puffy with tears. He looked at Eddie with both sorrow and hope, and then he headed for the door. Richie shook like a leaf. Once the door closed, he buried his head in his hands. Bev was speechless. Eddie looked up at her to see that she had lit a cigarette as well. Richie's had dropped onto the floor, half-finished and dead. Eddie felt helpless. He didn't know how to comfort the boy beside him, for he feared any words would shatter him. He sat frozen as Richie sobbed into his hands. After several minutes, he simply shakily gasped and wheezed. Bev had gone upstairs in her silence, leaving Eddie and Richie by themselves. Eddie slowly reached out to the other.

"Richie?"

A long period of silence followed. "We need to go on the roof."

"The roof? Can we even get up there?"

“Follow me,” Richie rasped. Richie hesitantly rose from the couch and headed for the door. Eddie shadowed. Richie walked through the alleyway to the side of the townhouse and started up the fire escape behind. Eddie found through observation that these stairs led to the roof. He sighed in slightly tiredness as they reached the top. Richie immediately walked towards the edge of the roof and sat near the ledge. Eddie rested next to him. They sat in somewhat silence—the usual noise of the city crowded the air—for a long, long time. Richie’s breath hitched in his throat when he broke the silence like glass.

“Do you know how I got into music?”

“You’ve never told me.”

“My dad used to treat me like shit, and my mom was always drunk somewhere else. I’d come home from school and be yelled at, kicked, tripped, or even socked if it was a bad day. But I had this guitar. After a bad episode, I’d go to my room, lock my door, and play. I didn’t care how good or bad I was. I just wanted to put my feelings into something constructive. Then, I started singing. I did that for a looong time. But of course, my dad didn’t like it. One day, he heard me, and he completely went apeshit. He broke my nose, broke my guitar, called me a ‘queer’ and a ‘faggot’. ‘No son of mine sings,’ he said. ‘Only faggots and fairies sing. They can’t make dogshit with their hands, so they sing.’ I ran the hell out of there. I literally had absolutely nothing with me. I only knew Stan from high school, but we… we weren’t on speaking terms. I, uh, planted myself outside a bar in Portland, the Doug Fir, and sang for money. I did that for fucking weeks. Finally, by some miracle, the guy who ran the bar got me a gig. I’ve been on that same gig for forever.”

“Holy shit… Richie. But… how did you and St—“

“Stan showed up on my doorstep with Bill one day. They agreed to officially contribute to rent if they could stay here. I told Bev that we all got the townhouse together to save Stan and Bill from a few delicate questions.”

“What were those questions? If you don’t mind me asking.”

Richie was still for a while. “I’ll tell you later. Right now I need silence and you. That okay?”

Eddie nodded. Richie reached for Eddie’s hand and gently took it.

“Thanks, Ed.”

6. heart and home

Notes for the Chapter:

bitch are you ready for this

Eddie woke up with Richie next to him. Richie's pale, thin arms were wrapped around Eddie's stomach and his face with smushed into Eddie's side. Richie was still fast asleep. How did they get here? Eddie tried to remember as he sat in bed.

Richie and Eddie sat alone on the roof for a while. The night was peaceful; there was no urban, unnecessary noise. Richie still held Eddie's hand. They sat and exchanged few words for what seemed like an hour. Richie was the first to yawn, and then Eddie followed.

"We need to go back inside," Eddie tiredly mumbled.

Richie looked uneasy. He looked vulnerable. "I don't think I can go inside and look Stan in the eye tonight. Do you… do you think I can stay with you for a while?"

"Of course, Richie. I said it earlier. 'I have zero plans ever'."

Richie chuckled. "You're a huge fucking goof, Ed," he smiled, "I appreciate what you're doing for me. You literally met me a couple days ago and now look where we are."

"On top of a roof?"

"On top of a roof."

They fell silent again. The city was so tranquil in the dead of night. Eddie took the time to reflect on his living in Portland. Richie was right; they'd only known each other for a mere four or five days, and yet Eddie felt as if he had known the black-haired boy next to him for years. Richie was the boy who let him stay, and Eddie had no plans to leave. Eddie looked up at him. In the glow of the streetlights below them, he was effortlessly beautiful. His messy, black curls were as untamed as a lion. His freckles dotted his cheeks and nose like faint constellations. His eyes seemed focused—a cat watching a mouse—on the streets below; Richie's eyes

were tired, for bags seemed to be forming under them.

"Rich, I think it's about time we started heading out."

Richie blinked out of his daze. "Yeah, yeah… I suppose we go back to your hotel? You still have that room right?"

Eddie nodded, yawning. "It's not the most exquisite room, but we can make it work."

He helped Richie up. Richie stumbled a bit, but Eddie softly held his hand, lacing his fingers with the others. Eddie's hotel wasn't far. The walk there was mostly silent as Eddie felt Richie rubbing circles into his hand with his thumb. As Eddie's unlocked the door, a thought hit him.

"Wait, Rich, there's only one bed." His voice was a little panicky.

Richie snorted, running a hand through his hair. "Oh no, geez, what shall we do? Everyone knows that two boys can't sleep in the same bed together. It's illegal. Guess I'll sleep outside."

Eddie looked confused. Richie stopped laughing.

"Ed, I'm kidding. I don't mind the one bed if you don't mind."

Eddie felt the blood rush to his cheeks. "Of course I don't mind. We made out on your couch the first night we knew each other."

"I'd make a joke about it, but I'm so fuckin' schlumped." Richie fell back onto the bed.

"Sorry what?"

"Schlumped."

"The hell does that mean?"

"How the fuck do you consider yourself a part of this culture—fuck it, never mind—schlumped means tired as all fuck. And it's how I'm feeling right now." Richie fell back onto the bed.

"Huh. Well," Eddie still remained slightly confused, "let me get you a

shirt."

Ed wandered into the closet and changed quickly into an oversized shirt and boxers, grabbing a white shirt for the other. When he walked out, however, Richie lay on the bed in nothing but boxers. Eddie dropped the shirt.

"You alright, Eds?"

Eddie wheezed under his breath. There was an extremely attractive boy half-naked on his bed.

"Yeah, I'm okay. Just… schlumped."

"Then come join me. This bed is comfortable."

Eddie did as told. As he slid under the covers, Richie removed his glasses and turned in towards the other, face brushing Ed's side. He hesitantly raised his arm.

"Can I?" He mumbled, puppy eyes looking up at Eddie.

Eddie blushed and nodded. Richie sighed in fatigue and loosely wrapped his arm around Eddie's waist. To Eddie's amusement, Rich was out like a light after mere minutes. Eddie faintly scoffed and closed his eyes as well.

Eddie was drawn out of his memories by Richie's stirring. He slowly woke, gently tightening his hold on the waist of the boy above him.

"Morning, fucker," Eddie teased.

"What time is it?"

"Almost 11 a.m. You haven't missed anything."

Richie sighed. "I forgot for a second that I canceled getting together with the band. Thank fuck. I almost had a heart attack." He began to unconsciously draw small circles on Eddie's side. Eddie almost choked on air.

"We were gonna go to lunch anyways. At 3p.m. Did you remember?"

“I remembered. That’s why I canceled it.”

Eddie’s thoughts clicked. “Did you actually plan on coming over?”

Richie laughed into Ed’s skin. “Actually, no, I didn’t. When Bev texted me about wanting to tell you Stan and I’s story, I thought I’d want to sleep in after the… long night I was looking forward to.” His voice fell flat as he ended his sentence.

“Hey,” Eddie sat up, “I heard what Stan had to say, and I haven’t left. I’m not going to leave. If my opinion of you had changed, do you think you’d even be in this bed right now?”

“…Thanks, Ed.” Richie sat up, running a hand through his tangled hair. He reached over and grabbed his glasses from off of the nightstand. Eddie found that his gaze lingered on him. He didn’t break his subtle stare as Richie met his eyes. Richie giggled if that’s what you’d call it.

“Well, you’re cute this morning,” Rich, grinning like a fool, slightly leaned in towards Eddie, his eyes on his lips. Eddie blushed like hell. He felt Richie’s hand softly touching his.

“Eddie Kaspbrak, can I kiss you?”

Eddie swallowed. “Please.”

Richie grinned harder. The last things Eddie saw before he closed his eyes were Richie’s adorable dimples, and then he felt soft lips on his own. His hand drifted up to Richie’s cheek; his thumb brushed his jawline. This was no experimental boy from college. This was Richie Tozier: the bad boy with commitment issues, lead singer in a bar band, someone he shouldn’t trust; however, Eddie found it in himself that he felt something for him. When Richie pulled off, Ed saw that a pink flush sat in his cheeks amongst his constellation freckles.

“I’m guessing… lunch today is now a date, right?”

“Richie Tozier, I swear to God,” Eddie laughed, his face burning.

“Is that a yes?” Richie hopped off the bed. “If so, I’m gonna need to go home and clean right the fuck up. Can’t look bad on our first

date."

Eddie watched as the taller boy waltzed around the room to gather his few things. As he neared the door, he looked back at Eddie with one raised eyebrow.

"*Yes!* Yes, it's a date," Ed yelled giddily at him.

"Good! I'll pick you up here at 3 p.m."

Notes for the Chapter:

are you shook tho